

# Annual Report

## Greeting from the State Librarian

On behalf of the State Library staff, I am please to introduce this annual report to the citizens of Montana. We work hard to provide libraries, state employees, and others with sound advice about quality library service and information to meet their needs. We strive to exceed your expectations and pledge to continue to improve our services in the next year.

Of course, this report cannot contain everything that the agency accomplished this year. We highlighted the items that we think are of most interest to you. If you would like to discuss any aspect of the report, please call me at 406-444-3115.

Thank you for letting us serve you.

*Karen Strege*

Montana State Librarian



A few MSL staff members: Barbara Pepper Rotness, Dave Highness, Bob Cooper, Dixie Carlson, Diane Gunderson, Cheryl Christopher, Pam Smith, Patcharin Williams, Don Cornish and John Hinshaw.

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## Special points of interest:

- A statewide database that provides more than 1,700 full text periodicals, 110,000 company profiles, and other online reference material was made available to all Montana citizens.
- NRIS unveiled its enhanced web-based information services.
- The Montana Library Network was established.
- LSTA provided 23 small public libraries with funds to purchase Internet access computers.
- LDD negotiated discounts for subscriptions to electronic resources.
- MTBL celebrated its 30th Anniversary.

## Greeting from MSL Commission Chair Mike Schulz

What a year for Montana libraries! The state's libraries and library users have benefited handsomely in so many ways thanks to the efforts of the Montana State Library. The entrepreneurial spirit and the dedicated staff of MSL have truly shrunk "the digital divide" in many ways this year. It has been a pleasure and privilege for all the commission members to work so closely with the fine folks at the MSL who give so generously of their rich ideas, boundless optimism, and giving spirit. I would like to outline a few of the many and varied accomplishments of the state library in Fiscal Year 1999.

The 1999 legislature funded the statewide periodical database that brought eight wonderful databases that benefit every citizen in the state. Not only that, the database licensing agreement allows library's to extend searching privileges to users' home computers. This is truly a leap forward in our quality of service and access to information for all Montana's citizens.

These databases are part of the vision of the Montana Library Network which is fast becoming a reality. This exciting information will ensure the delivery of quality networked library materials and services to all Montanans.

The legislature also passed a measure to allow all types of libraries to join federations. We are looking forward to the productive interactions that will take place at these strengthened federations. We have been most excited by the many federations that have included libraries of all types before this legislation and know that

Montana's library users will be big winners with this consolidation.

The Library and Information Service Department at MSL is in the process of reorganizing their work flow and resources to more effectively handle increase demand by their patrons. More over, they are unveiling new services and strategies to bring resources to the desktop of state government.

The Montana Talking Book Library celebrated 30 years of quality service to its patrons. I had the privilege of presenting an award at this year's volunteer appreciation luncheon. It was a truly uplifting time seeing all that program hard working staff and volunteers receive recognition for their fine work.

The Natural Resource Information System Department unveiled its enhance web-based information services so that more users can reach its

excellent suite of resources. NRIS, including the Heritage Program, is on the forefront of providing interactive, accurate, and timely data through the World Wide Web.

The Library Development Team continue to traverse the state to provide face-to-face assistance to libraries. They are supported in their efforts by all MSL staff and offer very successful training like the learning expo that occurred in Lewistown.

I could go on and on with wonderful examples of growth and development, but I had better stop. Karen and her fine staff across the state are doing a fantastic job. The Commission is excited about the possibilities we will be exploring in the FY 2000-Year Report.

*Mike Schulz*  
MSL Commission Chair



MSL Commissioners: David Johnson, Al Randall, Mary Doggett, Dorothy Laird, Rosemary Garvey, Mike Schulz, and Cheri Bergeron.

# Statewide Library Resources

## Library and Information Services Department [LISD]

In Fiscal Year 1999, LISD began to re-examine its activities in light of its role as the principal library for state government.



The Commission adopted more appropriate and descriptive policies for information services and collection development as MSL defined its primary patron populations and collection resource responsibilities. Staff developed and tested a model tool for assessing state agency information needs and evaluating the pertinence of library resources. Staff also created automated forms to gather data to analyze the use of information desk services.

LISD reference staff continues serving Montana's library community as backup for their reference questions. Biweekly e-mail postings alerted librarians to notable reference works and pro-

**"Staff developed and tested a model tool for assessing state agency information needs and evaluating the pertinence of library resources."**

fessional development materials available from the State Library. Staff responded to 4,039 contacts at the front desk, loaned 4,825 items from our collection to patrons and libraries, and secured 2,876 items from other libraries for use by state employees.

Staff provided a workshop for non-profit associations, librarians, and local state government employees on the Foundation Center CD-ROM and Internet resources for grant seekers.

New computers were installed for use by walk-in patrons to access the Internet, CD-ROM, and online information resources. The library placed additional signs to identify library services more clearly.

Additions to the collection included 147 reference resources and 177 books, 6,060 Federal documents and 850 state publications. A total of 4,709 State publications were distributed to Montana depository libraries. The library upgraded worksta-



Marjorie Smith helps a patron at the Information Desk.

tion hardware and trained staff to use the state-standard Windows 95 and Microsoft Office Suite software.

Fiscal year 1999 saw the beginning of a thorough reexamination of client needs and a strategic planning process to bring LISD services fully into line with the opportunities of the Information Age.



## Montana Talking Book Library [MTBL]



National Library Service Network Division Chief, Carolyn Sung, presented the Telephone Pioneer volunteers with an award for thirty-five years of outstanding service. The awarded was accepted by Tom Basinger.

In 1998, MTBL celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of service to Montana citizens in the Capitol Rotunda. National Library Service Network Division Chief, Carolyn Sung, presented the Telephone Pioneer volunteers with an award for thirty-five years of outstanding patron service. TBL gave special recognition to summer youth volunteers for their exceptional service to patrons.

MTBL patrons numbered 2,624. Also, 122 schools, libraries, hospitals, nursing homes, convalescent centers, and independent care facilities were served. Patrons received over 141,517 talking books, descriptive videos, and large print books. TBL provided Braille materials to 58 patrons.



Summer youth volunteers were given special recognition for their exceptional service to patrons.

Twenty-one volunteer teams narrated, monitored, and reviewed regional books for its local collection through the Montana Cassette Book Recording Program. Nineteen volunteer teams operated in the Helena recording studio and two teams worked at the State Prison in Deer Lodge.

The Montana Talking Book Library employs six employees and utilizes over 100 volunteers (equal to six FTE employees) to circulate, inspect and maintain over 240,000 book copies, 4,000 machines, and over 730 machine accessories for Montana patrons.

**"The Montana Talking Book Library employs six employees and utilizes over 100 volunteers (equal to 6 FTE employees) to circulate, inspect and maintain over 240,000 book copies, 4,000 machines ..."**



Front: Susie Merrin, Director of MTBL Recording Program, Richard Smith, Manager, Prison Recording Team, Back: Mike Schulz, MSL Commission Chair, Dave Beatty, Prison Librarian

## Library Development Department



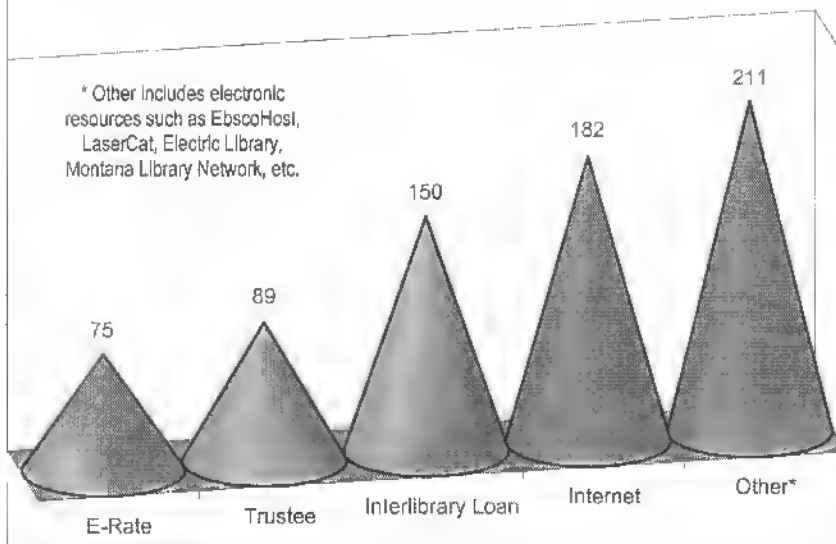
Fall workshops were well attended.

LDD's primary accomplishment was the statewide promotion of the use of electronic resources by librarians in Montana. LDD achieved this through three year-long projects.

Using federal grant funds (LSTA), MSL provided funds to purchase public Internet access computers for 23 small public libraries that otherwise could not have provided such access. MSL also provided funding to six larger public libraries to upgrade from dial-up modem access to a direct connection to the Internet.

Discounts for statewide subscriptions to electronic resources were negotiated, marketed, and managed for all types of libraries. These resources include the OCLC/WLN LaserCat\* regional database and the Gale Research InfoTrac\* electronic magazine database.

### LIBRARIANS TRAINED IN USE OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES DURING FISCAL YEAR 1999



The Montana Library Network (MLN) is a project of the Montana State Library, and the inspiration of the MSL Networking Task Force. Many states have or are building statewide library networks for better delivery of library materials and services. MLN is working as a partner with Montana libraries, nearby states, Canadian provinces and national library organizations to ensure the delivery of quality networked library materials and services to all Montanans. Bruce Newell was hired as MLN director in May, 1999.

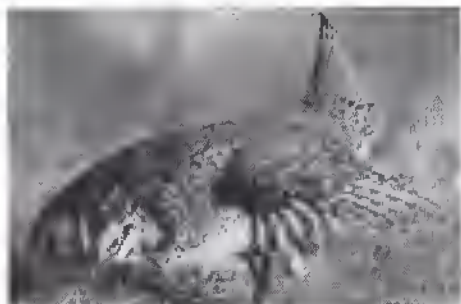


This department provided formal training to staff from all types of libraries in the use of electronic resources. Workshops were offered on the use of the Internet, the interlibrary loan sharing protocol, EbscoHost\*, LaserCat\*, and InfoTrac\*. LDD provided formal training to public librarians and trustees on planning and funding of electronic resources, including E-Rate discounts. LDD continued to provide information on number of library-related topics to librarians from all types of libraries through mailings, telephone consultations, and site visits.

\*See "Acronyms Etc." on last page of report

# Natural Resource Information System [NRIS]

## Natural Heritage Program



*Tympanuchus phasianellus columbianus*  
Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse  
(Phasianidae)

The Heritage Program expanded its databases by 20% during 1999, and updated another 20% of the database records. Much of this new information was gathered by Heritage biologists, who conducted over 30 biological inventories of significant species and communities, focusing on such diverse areas as Sheridan and Powder River Counties, the Judith Mountains, Flathead and Yellowstone basins, Centennial Valley, and Big Horn Canyon. Partnerships with federal and state agencies, and private organizations made these studies possible.

**"Staff handled about 150 requests per month...an additional 975 user requests per month through its website."**

Flathead River watershed. More than 150 copies of the report (also posted on the Heritage website), have already been requested.

Data requests also saw a steady increase this year, topping 100 for the first time in three different months. In addition to these mediated re-

quests, the website serviced 975 user queries per month. This is a significant increase from last year and may reflect the new information and search tools that are now available over the web.

The highlight of our website's growth was the new Rare Plant Field Guide, an on-line, searchable encyclopedia of 322 Montana plants species that includes detailed descriptions, color photos, illustrations, and distribution maps. This on-line resource represents the first of its type in the nation, and took over three years to develop. New "Species of Special Concern" lists were also updated and are now available on the Heritage Website.

**"Heritage Program database increased by 20% during the year..."**

The Heritage Program completed a four-year strategic plan with input from more than 20 diverse partner and client groups. This plan identifies ambitious goals and strategies aimed at delivering more and better information on Montana's sensitive and significant biological features to all those who need it.



*Agoseris lackschewitzii*  
Pink Agoseris (Asteraceae)  
Photo by Charmaine Refsdal Delmatier



## Geographic and Water Information Systems [GIS and WIS]

NRIS staff provided 2,603 databases, printouts, reports, maps, and referrals in response to user requests. Users accessed NRIS Internet pages an average of 15,270 times per month, representing a large increase over last year. This increase likely resulted from the wide variety of new information, data, and data products such as maps provided on the web site.

Through a cooperative project, NRIS received statewide coverage of digital versions of the USGS 7.5 topographic maps. The maps, called Digital Raster Graphic (DRG) maps are useful for a variety of GIS projects. NRIS increased access to the DRGs by putting them on the web site.

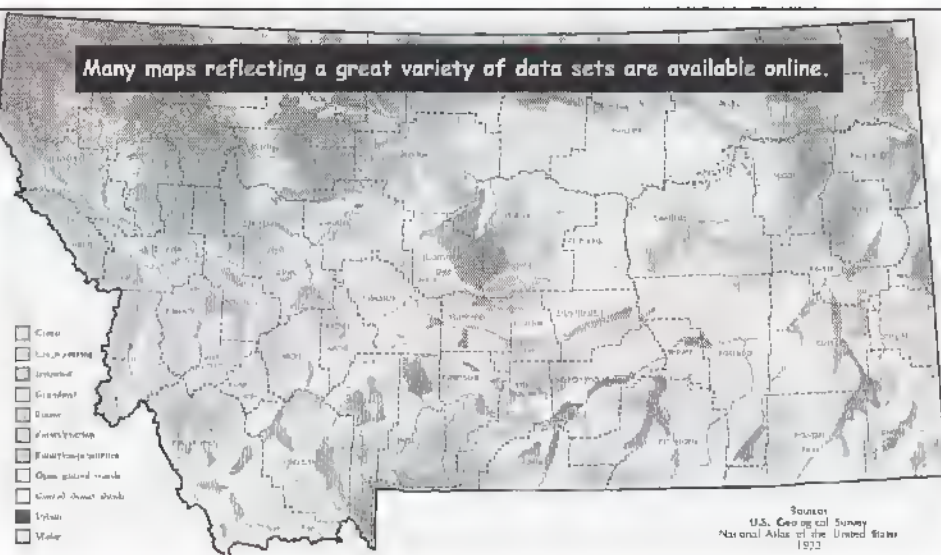
NRIS started to update and enhance the natural resource data clearinghouse. Through funding support

**"NRIS staff provided 2,604 databases, printouts, reports, maps and referrals."**

from Fish Wildlife and Parks [FWP] and the Department of Environmental Quality [DEQ],

NRIS purchased a new web data server computer to increase data storage capacity and speed of access. NRIS also received a donation of new database software called Spatial Database Engine (SDE) from ESRI, a GIS software company. Staff use SDE to manage and serve all clearinghouse data. SDE provides much more efficient search and retrieval performance than the previous software.

NRIS and Heritage staff participated in and provided presentations to a variety of coordination bodies including: Montana GIS Technical Working Group (TWG), Montana Geographic Information Council (MGIC), Watershed Coordination Council, Wetlands Coordination Council, Groundwater



Assessment Steering Committee, and Environmental Quality Council.

NRIS, working with DEQ and the Montana Watercourse has developed a web-based data entry application for volunteer water monitoring groups. Once registered in the Monitoring Program, volunteers can use a standard web browser to enter data, create graphs, display stream profile data, and share data with other volunteers across Montana.

Training and workshops represent a significant part of the NRIS and Heritage workload. State agencies participated in a variety of general presentations and more focused two-day workshops on how to use desktop GIS software and the web pages. NRIS conducted a half dozen workshops on ArcView GIS for DEQ, Department of FWP, and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). These workshops improve the agencies ability to use information to support decisions and activities like permit processing.

The success experienced with the interactive GIS applications launched in the last biennium have inspired NRIS

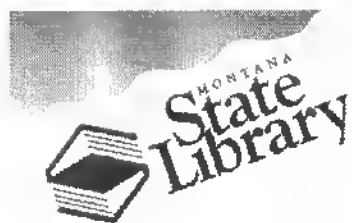
and Heritage to plan for the next generation of web-based patron tools. Through a variety of cooperative efforts, NRIS built several new interactive map applications that provide access to data that have previously been unavailable to the public. Wetlands inventory, Underground Storage Tank (UST), and Volunteer Water Monitoring data are all served by a standardized application that patrons can access using typical web browsers like Netscape and Microsoft Internet Explorer. The Montana Rivers Information System (MRIS), an important fisheries database, will be served over

the web early next year. Web-based access to

these databases represent a major accomplishment for NRIS and a new valuable service to patrons.

Web pages for GIS, WIS, and Heritage have been updated and refined to increase access to natural resource information and provide links to Montana data housed in national data systems.

**"Web pages...increase access to natural resource information and provide links to Montana data housed in national data systems."**



## Acronyms Etc.

**ArcView:** Easiest to use database and mapping program for GIS

**DEQ:** Department of Environmental Quality

**DNRC:** Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

**DRG:** Digital Raster Graphic

**EbscoHost:** Indexes and abstracts more than 3,000 scholarly journals. Provides full text for more than 550 journals.

**ESRI:** Environmental Systems Research Institute

**FTE:** Full Time Employee

**FWP:** Fish Wildlife and Parks

**GIS:** Geographic Information System

**InfoTrac:** A full text index of over 1700 full text magazine, 110,000 company profiles, and other online reference materials

**LaserCat:** Provides access to 4.5 million bibliographic records with local call numbers and holdings for more than 500 libraries.

**LDD:** Library Development Department

**LISD:** Library and Information Services Department

**LSTA:** Library Service Technology Act

**MGIC:** Montana Geographic Information Council

**MLN:** Montana Library Network

**MRIS:** Montana River Information System

**MTBL:** Montana Talking Book Library

**NHP:** Natural Heritage Program

**NRIS:** Natural Resource Information System

**OCLC:** Online Computer Library Center

**SDE:** Spatial Database Engine

**TWG:** Technical Working Group

**USGS:** United States Geographic Service

**UST:** Underground Storage Tank

**WIS:** Water Information System

## Montana State Library Organizational Chart

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY  
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